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CPW Report No. 58--USSR

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Party Activities:

Intraparty work, political education and agitation, self-criticism and criticism, particularly from below (snizu), predominate the output on Party activities. Although the various failings are old and familiar their criticism is now reenforced by new quotations from the principal speeches made at the recent All-Union Party Congress. Thus MOLOT (22 October) declares editorially that the level of Party political work "is still lagging below the requirements of daily life" and points to Malenkov as authority for that statement. The paper speaks also of the "well-known directive" (khorosho izvestnoye ukazanie) issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on the unspecified shortcomings in Rostov oblast Party affairs. But the mistakes "tolerated previously", it is claimed, are still in evidence and "far from having been eliminated." The tendency of many Communist officials, the editorial hints, is either to concern themselves with Party affairs exclusively without regard to economic matters or, should an emergency arise, to take over the administration of various branches of economy. Both of these methods are severely condemned by the Party as improper procedure amounting to a violation of Party discipline. What is worse, such practices are in contravention of Stalin's theory of "the inseparability of politics from economics" (nerazdelimost politiki i ekonomii).

The paper cites a couple of instances to show that "a gap between Party work...and the daily requirements of kolkhoz economy" will have an adverse effect on production. In Razvilenskiy rayon, for example, political work among the masses has been neglected, and agricultural production is therefore falling short of its targets. In Stalinskiy rayon of Taganrog city the failure of the combine-making plant to keep up with its production schedules is similarly attributed to the Party's failure to further the political enlightenment of the masses. Lack of consideration for the primary organizations (pervichnie organizatsii), the lowest rung of the Party ladder and the "chief link between the Party and the masses," is blamed for a great deal of intraparty mismanagement. These organizations are often by-passed by rayon and other Party Committees and otherwise left out of account in matters affecting the political education of workers and collective farmers.

The disregard for the primary Party organizations is also the subject of an editorial discussion by STALINSKIY PUT of 21 October. It would be unwise, says the paper, to shut one's eyes (zakryt glaza) to the fact that intraparty affairs in Kustanai oblast are badly administered and that many Communists are not fulfilling their "vanguard mission in production" (avangardnaya rol v proizvodstve). These shortcomings stem from the "unsatisfactory guidance" (neudovletvoritelnoye rukovodstvo) of the primary organizations which perform a specific function in intraparty activities. To circumvent them, as many rayon Committees often do, is to weaken them and through them the entire Party machinery. Being "close" to the people, the primary organizations are called upon to exercise direct supervision of their educational, ideological and other activities. This, says the paper, enhances their importance and should make them worthy of greater consideration on the part of the higher party echelons. Pre-Congress propaganda on Party activities from the oblast level down had harped on the same point, but the 19th Party Congress made it clear that the primary organization is an indispensable component of the Communist hierarchy and is not to be underestimated. All the tasks facing the party -- in every sphere of public endeavor -- are to be tackled from the bottom up:

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In order to fulfill those tasks successfully it is absolutely necessary to increase the...fighting ability of the primary Party organizations which are the foundation of the Communist Party.

The same theme is pursued by KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA (26 October) in its discussion of these grassroots organizations which, it claims, have all too often been neglected by those whose duty it is to strengthen them. It must be admitted, the paper asserts, that many Party committees still "do not appreciate" (ne otseinvayut)

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the important function of the primary Party organizations and treat them as if they were superfluous. The result is a loss of responsibility on the part of minor Communist officials in industry and agriculture with the inevitable unfavorable production results.

One of the worst features of intraparty bureaucracy, says MOLOT on 28 October, is the "formalistic" approach to the business on hand: decisions are made and directives issued but their implementation is never checked. Although the Central Committee has recently singled out the Rostov oblast Party for severe criticism on that point "very little has been done in this field." In most cases the implementation of Party decisions is checked belatedly and only when an emergency arises. That progress in that respect is still slow has been established by the various Party conferences throughout the oblast:

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After the Party conferences, some town and rayon Party Committees continue to work in the same old way: issuing innumerable decisions but failing to check their implementation.

Criticism and self-criticism, the sine qua non of intraparty democracy, is on the whole not making much headway within the Party ranks, according to PRAVDA (20 October). Those who try to hinder this exercise in democracy are not only bureaucrats, they are "the sworn enemies of the Party" (zaklyatie vragi partii). Within a certain section (v nekotoroy chasti) of Party, government, economic and other workers Party and State discipline "is still weak", and only criticism from below, it is claimed, can eliminate that weakness. This is admittedly a tough problem since the Party bureaucrats are doing their best to stifle criticism which in turn tends to perpetuate bureaucracy. The paper even hints that certain officials "are trying to sanction anti-Party mores within the Party ranks" (pytayutsya utverdit v partiynykh ryadakh antipartiynie nrayv), and insists that "truthfulness and honesty" (pravdivost i chestnost) are the first two commandments for every Communist. Referring to the overall aspect of Party activities, the editorial alludes to some chinks in the Communist armor and believes that a little prodding is always in order:

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...the standard of Party political work still lags behind the exigencies of life, behind the tasks posed by the Party...we must overcome the shortcomings, errors and the negative features of the life and work of the Party organizations.

Russian version:

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...uroven partiynoy politicheskoy raboty vse eshche otstayot ot trebovaniy zhizni, ot zadach vydvigayemikh partiey...nado preodolet nedostatki, oshibki i chtitsatelnie yavleniya imeyushchie mesto v zhizni i rabote partiynykh organizatsiy.

MOLOT discloses (21 October) that instances of "provocatory revenge" for criticism have been revealed in Rostov town but does not offer any further details. It is merely pointed out that the anti-criticism attitude of the local Communist officials was serious enough to merit some attention in Khrushchev's speech at the 19th Party Congress in Moscow. On October 22 PRAVDA advertises to the same topic by indicating that it will take a great deal of official pressure and prodding before criticism and self-criticism are adopted as standard procedure of Party affairs. This method of work, the paper points out, is still largely underestimated by various Party Committees as witnessed by the continuing "persecution for criticism."

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Widespread Communist allergy to criticism from below is discussed also by CHERNOMORSKA KOMUNA on 23 October. "Contemptuous treatment", the paper says, is still a common reaction to the constructive suggestions from below. What is really contemptible about it is, according to the paper, that those who shout the loudest about their "implicit" devotion to Party principles are usually the ones who are over-sensitive to criticism:

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It is impossible to reconcile one's self to such a disgraceful phenomenon where some officials are endlessly shouting about their devotion to the Party, about development of criticism and self-criticism but in fact are suppressing it and are persecuting those who direct their criticism at them.

KIROVOGRADSKA PRAVDA complains (25 October) that the "voice of the masses" (gолос масс), meaning rank-and-file Party members as well as non-Communists, is still not heard by many of the leading officials. Suggestions from below to improve intra-party and economic work in the oblast are frequently disregarded, while a number of rayon Party Committees calmly continue the very antiparty practice they have so often been warned against: the encroachment upon the prerogatives of economic administration. An extreme case of intolerance toward criticism and critics is cited by ZARYA VOSTOKA on 25 October. At a meeting of the Stalino town Party the critical remarks of the secretary of the South Ossetian primary organization were subjected to such "a stream of abuse" from the presidium that the speaker "had to ask for permission" to complete his report. Unfortunately, the paper concludes, that is not an isolated case: a good many high Party officials still stifle criticism from below and persecute the critics.

Corruption and nepotism in the matter of Party personnel selection and appointments are inveighed against by PRAVDA on 20 October and echoed by a few regional transmissions. The paper says that no one is blind to the fact that family ties, personal friendship and similar un-Bolshevik considerations still go a long way toward facilitating the appointment of otherwise unsuitable candidates for certain executive positions. MOLOT declares (23 October) that this characteristic fits the Rostov Communist organization and RADYANSKA UKRAINA of the same date even goes further by referring to the "great damage" (велика шкода) done to the Ukrainian Communist organizations by frequent appointment of people of questionable political integrity and executive ability. The paper contends that the appointments of wrong people to wrong jobs are largely motivated by selfish considerations of certain officials who prefer to surround themselves with yes-men so that they can escape exposure from below and keep the Party and Government from discovering the true state of their affairs:

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They...conceal the truth about the actual situation at enterprises and plants, embellish the results of the work, place narrow departmental and local interests above those of the State, violate Soviet laws and State and Party discipline.

Ukrainian version:

Vony...prikhovuyut pravdu pro diysniy stan sprav na pidprielstvakh i v ustanovakh, prykrashayut rezulatty roboty, stavlyat vuzkovi-domchi i misnytski interesy vyshche vid zagalnoderzhavnnykh, porushuyut radyanski zakony, derzhavni i partiyni poryadky.

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A Gorobets article carried by RADYANSKA UKRAINA on 29 October (not broadcast) familiarly approves the disparaging remarks about the Chernivets oblast Party affairs made by Malenkov at the 19th Party Congress. The selection and appointment

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of the right personnel, he says, is still something to be achieved by the oblast Party. Nor is it evident that the Communist officials are very much concerned about checking the implementation of their decisions. What they actually prefer to do is exactly what the Party frowns upon: devote their chief attention to conferences, preparations and adoption of decisions (osnovnu uvgagu prydilayut zasidannym, pidgotovtsi i priynyattyu rishen). The writer suggests that the cause of intraparty democracy might be better served if "a check up from above were to coincide with a check up from below" (shchob perevirkha zverkhu poednuvalasya z perevirkoyu znyzu), that is rigid control of Party activities from above plus criticism from the rank and file.

Political education and propaganda which are among the chief duties of every Party member are claiming considerable attention on the regional radio and in the press. Added to the drive for larger enrollments in the Party network schools is the qualitative aspect of political education. As RADYANSKA UKRAINA complained recently (23 October), many Communists show little familiarity with doctrinal matters and "do not possess the necessary knowledge" (ne manut neobkhodimykh znan) or Marxism-Leninism. How, it is asked, can they be expected to indoctrinate the masses of "guide" the studies in the political schools? A broadcast from Poltava on 21 October quotes ZARYA POLTAVSHCHINY as saying that preparations for the new academic year in the Party schools are unsatisfactory. The indifferent attitude toward Communist education, that paper maintains, does not contribute much to the improvement of the Party members' political qualifications. It is intimated in this connection that the mass turnout of political school graduates frequently has little to do with the students' actual knowledge because they are treated as collectives rather than individuals:

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Political education work must be organized in such a way that every individual is able to assimilate the Marxist-Leninist science.

Disappointment with the progress of political education is expressed in a summarized KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA editorial broadcast on 19 October. The superficial assimilation of the revolutionary theory by both Communist and nonpartisans is not too encouraging, says the paper. The lack of interest shown by some officials in the quality of political education is matched by their unconcern about diminishing school attendance. Questions of basic doctrine are often relegated to a secondary place and "explained superficially" (razyasnayutsya poverkhnostno), and falling school attendance is not taken too seriously. The paper adds significantly that the poor class-room instruction of last year is making itself felt this year, and the mastery of the Marxist-Leninist theory will require a longer and more intense study:

The scale of political education reached last year does not correspond to those high demands which are set by the task of Communist construction...similar shortcomings exist...in the present educational year.

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Reiterating Stalin's dictum that "the most important condition for success" (glavneisheye uslovie uspekha) is the close contact between the Party and the masses, KRYMSKAYA PRAVDA asserts (21 October) that many of the Crimean political agitators have not justified the leader's trust. They are in fact idle, particularly in Simferopol, Kerch and other places. Party aims and policy must be dinned in the minds of workers and peasants until they become familiar with them:

If they do not understand today, explain it tomorrow; if they do not understand tomorrow, explain the day after.

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Just how much importance the Party attaches to the political indoctrination of the population is indicated in the editorial injunction to the propagandists that even the sick are not to be left out of account:

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Agitation and propaganda must be conducted everywhere: at enterprises and building sites, kolkhozes and sovkhozes, among fishermen and transport workers, in sanatoriums and in workers homes.

Russian text:

Agitatsionnaya i propagandistskaya rabota dolzhna provoditsya vseude: na predpriyatiakh i stroikakh, v kolkhozakh i sovkhozakh, sredi rybakov i rabotnikov transportsa, zdravnitsakh, uchrdzheniakh i po mestu zhitelstva trudyashchikhsya.

A BUGSKAYA ZARYA editorial broadcast from Nikolayev on 23 October lists a number of industrial enterprises where the workers have not even been told of the important decisions taken by the recent Party Congress. The agitators have "failed them" in their propaganda work. Familiarizing the workers with the "congress materials", though very important in itself, is only one aspect of the propagandist's work, says the paper. What the party demands of its agitators is to explain and interpret those high-level decisions in the light of current economic problems, which in plain English as well as in Russian means greater efforts on the part of the workers and farmers with a view to overfulfilling the Plan:

Agitation should be connected with concrete, practical facts inspiring the workers, collective farmers and employees of machine-tractor stations and sovkhozes to new labor successes.

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Communist education in the Komsomol school network is dealt with in a Kryvoruchko article in WINNIWSKA PRAVDA broadcast on 24 October. The non-Communist youths, says the author, "are very much inclined" to study the Marxist-Leninist theory this year, and it is the duty of every Komsomol member to encourage such desires and help in the enrollment of young men and women in the political schools. Far from doing this, however, many Komsomol organizations are said to be neglecting their own political education. (Among the doctrinal precepts these young Communists are expected to implant in the minds of their nonparty brethren, incidentally, is "the spirit of Soviet patriotism and the spirit of hatred for the Anglo-American warmongers":)

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The first day of study in the network of the Komsomol political education demonstrated that many Komsomol organizations have not prepared well for the educational year...In some organizations few Komsomol members are studying.

STALINSKY PUT (25 October) belabors the Communist officials in charge of political education for their failure to improve the unenviable schools progress so far. In only three of the oblast's rayons are the political school functioning satisfactorily, while in most of the others there has been "no improvement in comparison with recent years." In Uzunkulskiy, Zatobolskiy, Taranovskiy and a number of unnamed other rayons, class-room instruction is said to be poor and attendance uncertain.

Ideological Affairs:

In addition to the routine and familiar comment on ideological matters, the limited output is confined mostly to references to Stalin's "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR" and quotations from Malenkov's speech to the 19th Party Congress.

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Referring to the latter as a turning point in the life of the Soviet people and "a great demonstration of the unity of the Party", PRAVDA warns (2 November) against any relaxation of ideological propaganda among the people. The effort is in fact to be intensified because the job of "cleansing the people's minds" from such capitalist remnants as "prejudices and harmful traditions of the old society" (predrazsudki i vrednie traditsii starogo obshchestva) has not yet been completed. It is recalled that Khrushchev and other Congress speakers called attention to the still existing "serious shortcomings" in ideological work both among the population and within the Party itself. These failings could be rectified only by "courageous and constructive criticism" from the rank and file -- if the various party committees adopted a more tolerant attitude toward it. The underestimation of the importance of ideological work is said to have discouraged criticism in the industrial enterprises of Leningrad, Kiev, Minsk and other cities and adversely affected production. The paper says that at a recent meeting of the Kuibyshev Party organization, the ideological shortcomings "were barely touched upon." So intent were the Communists on steering clear of the subject that even a "written request to the presidium" to discuss ideological irregularities evoked no more than a few general sentences which could hardly have filled the "important gap" in the discussion.

A RADYANSKA UKRAINA editorial broadcast on 26 October reports that manifestations of "cosmopolitanism and Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism" are still in evidence here and there, and since there is no place for such baneful ideas in a socialist society they must be ruthlessly eliminated. Nor is their effect to be underrated because "they are too tenacious and capable of growing" (vony duzhe zhyvuchi, mozhut rosty). The editorial intimates also that pernicious ideological sentiments are not necessarily of local origin:

It should also be borne in mind that the enemies of the Soviet state are attempting to introduce, spread and encourage in our country all sorts of unhealthy sentiments and to ideologically demoralize the unstable elements of our society.

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Ukrainian version:

Slid pamyataty i pro te, shcho vorogi radyanskoy derzhavy namagayutsya protyagaty v nashu kraiinu, poshiryuvaty, pidigryvaty i rozduvaty vsiaki nezdorovi pastroi, ideologichno rozkladaty nestiyki elementy pashogo suspilstva.

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A PRAVDA editorial of 27 October which was reprinted by RADYANSKA UKRAINA on the 28th, says that too many Party officials tend to forget Malenkov's strictures against ideological deviations. These, it is emphasized, apply particularly to foreign capitalist influences from outside but the Party must not lose sight of the surviving anti-Soviet elements within the country:

It is necessary to wage a ruthless struggle against the infiltration of alien views, ideas and sentiments from abroad, from the capitalist countries, and from within, from groups hostile to the Soviet State which have not yet been finished off by the Party.

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Russian version:

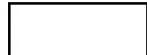
Neobkhodimo bezposhchadno borotsya protiv proniknovenia k nam chuzhikh vzglyadov, idei i nastroeniy izvne, so storony kapitalisticheskikh derzhav, i iznutri, so storony nedobitykh partei ostatkov vracheskikh sovetskoy vlasti grupp.

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As a result of the inadequate leadership in the sphere of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the paper declares, theoretical distortions still find their way into books, magazines and even scientific works. What makes good leadership so essential in matters of ideology is the fact that in some branches of science "the monopoly of certain groups of scientists has not yet been liquidated" (exhche polnostyu ne likvidirovana monopoliya nekotorykh grupp uchenykh).

In a radio broadcast for students of historical and dialectical materialism on 31 October, Molochkov says that the Marxist dialectical method alone makes possible the discovery of the "objective laws governing nature and society." And now that Marxism has been established as a true science, a number of hitherto obscure natural and social phenomena have become understandable. Scientist Lysenko, for example, could not have been able to make such a thorough study of plant life and "evolve a new biological law" had his researches not been based on Marxian science and the laws of dialectical materialism. The theory of quantitative and qualitative change, he says, is equally applicable to scientific and social phenomena. The collectivization of agriculture is cited as an example of such change, or transition, from individual holdings to a socialist system which, according to him, has been predetermined and governed by the universal law of dialectical materialism. The way this law operates, it is further claimed, depends on the social structure of the particular country. In a socialist society freed from hostile classes the continued process of change from old to new is smooth and gradual. This, however, does not apply to a country split by antagonistic classes in which the mentioned change can be accomplished only "by way of an explosion (putem vzryva), by way of destruction of the existing structure." Just what the explosion signifies is made clear in Molochkov's statement that materialist dialectics explain to the workers "the inevitability of class strife and revolutionary upheaval..." which bring about the preliminary conditions for a socialist State -- the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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